A8012-24

NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES

1990 ELECTED OFFICIALS SURVEY

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

January, 1991

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How have each of these conditions changed during the last year in your community?

	Improved	No Change	Worsened
Overall Economic Conditions	27	37	36
Unemployment	20	43	37
Cost of Living	3	37	60
Supply of Energy	6	80	14
Cost of Energy	2	27	71
City Fiscal Conditions	28	42	30
Interest Rates on City Borrowing	23	57	20
Water and Sewer Treatment	39	47	14
Street, Roads & Sidewalks	40	41	19
Public Transportation	12	71	17
Local Mortgage Conditions	15	48	37
Availability of Low Income Housing	14	55	31
Homelessness	3	61	36
Affordability of House Prices	18	40	42
Affordability of Rental Housing	11	49	40
Crime	16	51	33
Poverty	1	63	36
Availability of Social Services	11	72	17
Drugs	16	38	46
Education	16	66	18
Health Care	10	69	21
AIDS	4	58	38
Air Quality	11	72	17
Solid Waste	37	39	24

Percentage of officials reporting worsening conditions in their community in the following areas:

Year Survey Released	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
Cost of Energy	41	41	40	41	70
Cost of Living	38	36	43	45	60
Drugs	NR	54	67	58	46
Affordability of House Prices	42	40	51	42	42
Affordability of Rental Housing	27	38	45	34	40
AIDS	NR	35	36	13	38
Mortgage Conditions	12	32	35	12	37
Unemployment	26	18	15	8	37
Homelessness	28	40	43	18	36
Overall Economic Conditions	27	22	17	14	36
Poverty	33	35	38	19	36
Crime	23	41	45	37	33
Availability of Low Income Housing	27	37	40	24	31
City Fiscal Conditions	31	33	30	17	30
Solid Waste	NR	35	39	36	24
Health Care	NR	23	21	15	21
Interest Rates on City Borrowing	13	22	32	9	20
Streets, Roads & Sidewalks	27	30	30	20	19
Education	NR	20	17	12	18
Availability of Social Services	NR	26	22	8	17
Air Quality	NR	19	24	13	17
Public Transportation	18	19	19	10	17
Supply of Energy	5	5	8	4	14
Water & Sewer Treatment	13	17	24	13	14

NR = Not Rated, the seven conditions marked this way in 1987 did not appear on the list of conditions to be evaluated in that survey.

1987 through 1989 surveys were done on-site at the annual Congress of Cities and results are not strictly comparable to the latter two surveys.

Which three of the conditions listed are creating the most important problems in your community?

	Percent
Overall Economic Conditions	34%
Drugs	31%
Solid Waste Disposal	28%
City Fiscal Conditions	23%
Crime	22%
Streets,Roads & Sidewalks	21%
Education	20%
Unemployment	17%
Cost of Living	17%
Water and Sewer Treatment	15%
Availability of Low Income Housing	14%
Affordability of House Prices	11%
Cost of Energy	8%
Affordability of Rental Housing	7%
Health Care	6%
Public Transportation	5%
Homelessness	5%
Local Mortgage Conditions	4%
Air Quality	3%
Availability of Social Services	3%
Poverty	2%
Interest Rates on City Borrowing	2%
AIDS	1%
Supply of Energy	1%

Which three of the conditions listed have deteriorated the most in your community during the past five years?

	Percent
Drugs	31%
Crime	24%
Streets, Roads & Sidewalks	24%
Affordability of House Prices	22%
Overall Economic Conditions	22%
Solid Waste Disposal	18%
Cost of Energy	16%
City Fiscal Conditions	15%
Cost of Living	14%
Affordability of Rental Housing	14%
Education	14%
Unemployment	13%
Availability of Low Income Housing	13%
Water and Sewer Treatment	9%
Local Mortgage Conditions	8%
Health Care	7%
Homelessness	7%
Public Transportation	6%
Poverty	5%
Air Quality	5%
AIDS	4%
Availability of Social Services	3%
Interest Rates on City Borrowing	2%
Supply of Energy	2%

Which three of the conditions listed are going to be the most difficult to deal with during the next two years?

	Percent
Solid Waste Disposal	34%
Drugs	32%
City Fiscal Conditions	31%
Overall Economic Conditions	29%
Crime	25%
Education	24%
Streets, Roads & Sidewalks	15%
Water and Sewer Treatment	14%
Unemployment	12%
Cost of Living	11%
Cost of Energy	11%
Homelessness	9%
Health Care	8%
Availability of Low Income Housing	7%
Poverty	7%
Air Quality	6%
Availability of Social Services	5%
Affordability of House Prices	5%
AIDS	4%
Affordability of Rental Housing	4%
Interest Rates on City Borrowing	3%
Public Transportation	2%
Local Mortgage Conditions	1%
Supply of Energy	1%

Which three of the conditions listed have improved the most in your community during the past five years?

	Percent
Water and Sewer Treatment	36%
Streets, Roads & Sidewalks	33%
Solid Waste Disposal	26%
Overall Economic Conditions	25%
City Fiscal Conditions	24%
Education	20%
Unemployment	19%
Affordability of House Prices	14%
Availability of Social Services	13%
Crime	11%
Public Transportation	11%
Health Care	10%
Interest Rates on City Borrowing	10%
Affordability of Rental Housing	8%
Air Quality	8%
Drugs	7%
Local Mortgage Conditions	7%
Availability of Low Income Housing	5%
Supply of Energy	4%
Homelessness	3%
Cost of Living	3%
Cost of Energy	2%
AIDS	1%
Poverty	0%

Overall, how would you say your state government is currently responding to the needs of your city or town?

Excellent	1%
Good	21%
Fair	46%
Poor	27%
Fail	5%

If city tax rates are not increased, how would city services in your community be affected next year?

Will Expand Service Levels	4%
Will Maintain Service Levels	56%
Will Decrease Service Levels	40%

During the past year (1990) overall city service levels have:

Increased	31%
Decreased	12%
Remained Constant	57%

During the next year (1991) overall city service levels will:

Increase	20%
Decrease	20%
Remain Constant	60%

Characterize your community's capacity to keep up with infrastructure needs:

Keeping up	52%
Not keeping up	27%
Unable to get ahead	21%

How would you characterize the thoroughness and accuracy of the 1990 census in your city or town?

Very thorough and accurate	26%
Appeared thorough, but wasn't accurate	38%
Neither thorough or accurate	36%

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A good friend of yours has just called and inquired about the prospects of a young person finding a job and beginning a career in your city/town. How would you describe your community for the prospective newcomer?

In terms of community <u>growth</u>:

Great	27%
Fair	58%
Poor	15%

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In terms of <u>opportunities</u>:

Great	19%
Fair	59%
Poor	22%

Grading Federal Government Performance

Points		0	1	2	3	4
	Average	Fail	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Housing	1.8	9%	24%	47%	17%	3%
Homelessness	1.4	17%	41%	33%	7%	2%
Drugs	1.5	15%	37%	30%	16%	2%
Clean Air	2.0	4%	23%	43%	28%	2%
Budget Deficit	0.8	44%	40%	11%	3%	2%
Poverty	1.3	20%	39%	32%	7%	2%
Education	1.7	10%	28%	46%	14%	2%
Disaster Assistance	2.4	3%	11%	39%	38%	9%
Solid Waste	1.6	11%	35%	40%	13%	1%
Transportation	1.9	8%	23%	39%	27%	3%
S&Ls and Banks	0.6	57%	30%	9%	4%	0%
Taxes	1.3	22%	35%	37%	6%	0%

About This Report

The sixth annual National League of Cities (NLC) survey of municipal elected officials reported on these pages is the result of a mail and phone survey conducted the latter part of November 1990 through early January 1991. A random sample of 700 elected city and town officials was drawn from a list of all elected municipal officials with a 1980 population of more than 10,000.

Two hundred sixty nine responses were received and tabulated, with this level of response it would be expected, with a 95 percent degree of confidence, that answers would vary by no more than six percent from the results which would be obtained if all elected officials in this size class of cities were polled.

The survey was restricted to communities with populations greater than 10,000 because the NLC elected officials data base from which the sample was drawn, is not complete for the over 20,400 cities and towns with populations of less than 10,000.

Who Responded

Reflecting the composition of the group of officials from which the sample was drawn 17 percent of the responding officials were mayors, while 83 percent were council members or other municipal officials.

Again reflecting the sample, 76 percent of the officials were from communities of 10,000 to 49,999 population, 13 percent were from communities between 50,000 and 99,999, 7 percent were from communities of 100,000 to 299,999 and 4 percent were from the 50 communities with populations in excess of 300,000.

Conducting the Survey

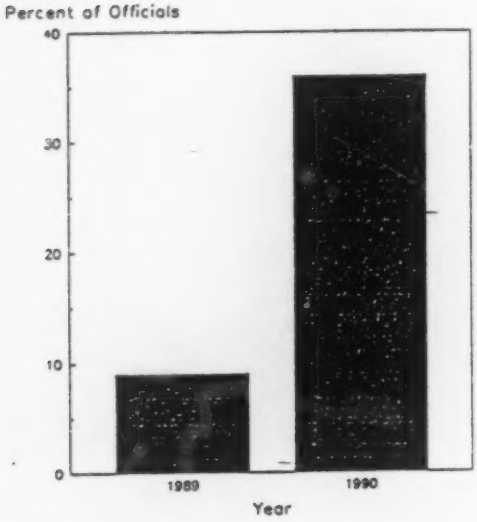
Questions were developed and the sample was drawn by the National League of Cities.

The survey was conducted by the Survey and Evaluation Services Center for Urban Studies, College of Urban, Labor and Metropolitan Affairs, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

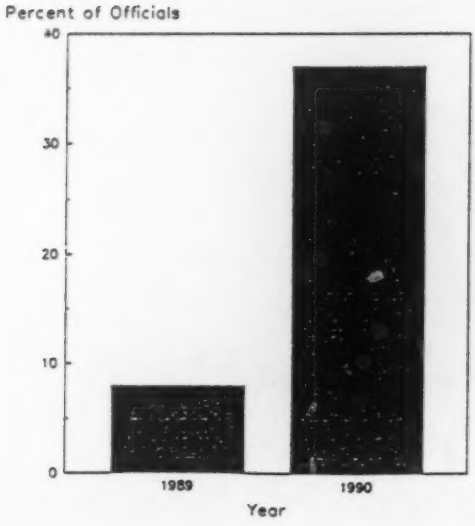
The Center for Urban Studies provides a central focus for interdisciplinary research on urban issues at Wayne State University. The Center is located in the College of Urban, Labor and Metropolitan Affairs, a new college created to focus and enhance the University's efforts to fulfill its urban mission.

Survey and Evaluation Services (SES) is directed by Neva Nahan and is one of six programs within the Center. SES specializes in survey research and program evaluation.

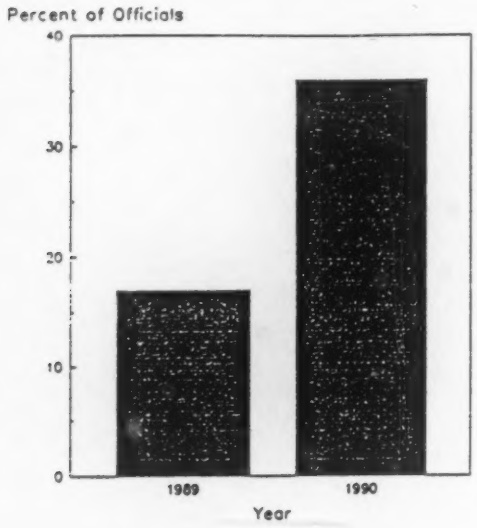
Worsening of Economic Conditions
in Their Community Reported by
Increased Percentage of Officials



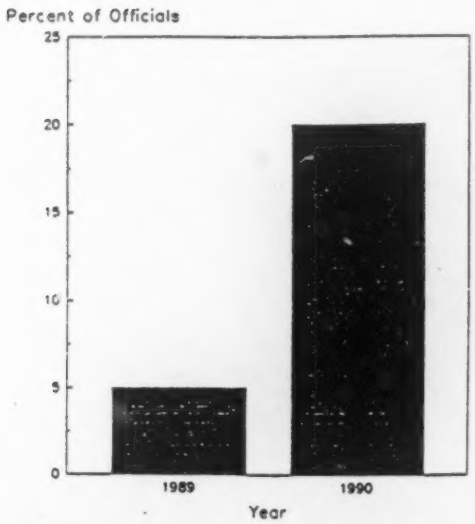
Worsening Unemployment
Reported by Increased Percentage
of Municipal Officials



City Fiscal Conditions Worsening
According to Increased Number of City Officials



Service Cuts Expected
By Increased Numbers of City Officials



Most Important Community Problems

Change in Community Conditions